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ABSTRACT

Four hundred and fifty-three patrons responded to a 1976 library use survey conducted at California State College at Dominguez Hills to assess present effectiveness and identify areas of concern for use in planning. The study found that some library patrons use the local public libraries because they are more convenient, while others use larger academic libraries because they perceive them as having better collections for their needs. Most respondents rated the college library's 16 facilities and eight services favorably. Only a small portion of the patrons, however, could be identified as heavy users. There was a predictable balance in the reasons why people use the library. A large number of people did not respond or responded that they did not use many of the services. The study concluded that most patrons lack knowledge of the scope of facilities available, and a user education program is planned. Survey form and user comments are appended. (KP)

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SURVEY OF USER ATTITUDES

Leo F. Cain Educational Resources Center

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Library Use Survey Committee

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The gathering of statistics by libraries for purposes of program evaluation has become a function almost as important as classifying and cataloging material so patrons will be able to use it. However, no matter how good or bad a set of library statistics (total volumes, circulation records, number of people who enter or leave the building, reference questions answered, etc.) may be, they cannot answer the essential question that a library must ask of itself: are we meeting the needs of our patrons? It is becoming something of an unwritten law in library science that the best way to determine if a library is meeting the needs of its clientele is simply to ask the clientele involved. It was to that end that the library of the California State College - Dominguez Hills conducted a survey of user attitudes. The survey, conducted during the Fall Quarter, 1976, was the first in the school's history, and the library hoped to use the responses gathered to make a reasonable assessment of its present effectiveness and identify areas of concern for consideration in planning library services for the future.

A questionnaire (appendix - p. 1A, 1B) was used to gather data in the survey. The questionnaire was developed with the participation of the professional staff after careful examination of the literature on library surveys, and was pre-tested by library student assistants before reaching its final form. Patrons were asked during the week of November 15 - November 21, 1976, to respond to the questionnaire, which was available at either the circulation desk, the reserve book room, the Audio-Visual department, and various campus locations outside the library.

A total of 453 usable questionnaires were completed, 247 from inside the library and 207 from outside the library. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences was used to compute the data from the completed questionnaires. The frequency of response to each question can be found with the corresponding question in the appendix (p. 2A, 2B). In the summary of the results, which follows, the responses will predominately be discussed in terms of percentages.

Academic Status	% of Total Enrollment	% of Respondents
Graduate	13	15
Senior	28	36
Junior	29	28
Sophomore	13	11
Freshman	10	6
Other	7	0

TABLE - I

The response of Part I (academic status; see Table I) and Part II (school or department; see Table II) reflect with some accuracy the actual enrollment at Dominguez Hills. The difference in the figures in the "Other" category in Table I is a result of some respondents perceiving themselves as having some academic status, while the college officially

School or Department	% of Total Enrollment	% of Respondents
Small College	2	3
Humanities/Fine Arts	11	13
Natural Sciences/Mathematics	5	13
Social/Behavioral Sciences	26	31
Management	31	28
Education	5	7
Experiential Education	1	0
External Degree	12	1
Other	7	4

TABLE - II

has them listed in the "Other" category. In Table II, the External Degree figures are a result of the fact that the External Degree is basically an off-campus program, and students in that program have a tendency to be on campus less than other students.

In response to Part III of the survey, 95% of the respondents said they were taking 6 or more units, while 74% identified themselves as day students, with 22% responding as night students and 4% who evenly attend both day and night classes. These figures were as expected by the library.

Part IV revealed more interesting results. 91% of the respondents said they use the library at Dominguez Hills. However, 66% responded that they also use another library. Forty-eight libraries were named by the 272 patrons who responded to the question asking which other libraries were used. The libraries that were cited five or more times are listed in Table III.

Library	Frequency of Response	% of Response
Torrance Public	46	17
UCLA	44	16
Carson Public	24	9
Palos Verdes Public	24	9
Inglewood Public	21	8
Cal. State Univ. - Long Beach	18	7
USC	13	5
Cal. State Univ. - Los Angeles	5	2
El Camino College	5	2
Los Angeles Public	5	2
Redondo Beach Public	5	2

TABLE - III

When asked why they use another library, a total of 388 responses were gathered (some respondents gave multiple answers, which were acceptable). Of the total response, 51% said they use another library because it is closer to home, however, 28% responded that they use another library because it has better material for their needs. The library was concerned about these responses because it showed an apparent lack on the part of the library to meet some of the information needs of some of its patrons. A cross-tabulation was made to determine the school or department affiliation of those respondents (Table IV). One person did not respond to Part II, but did state he/she uses another library for its collection.

School or Department	Frequency of Response Better Material	% of Response: Better Material
Small College	5	5
Humanities/Fine Arts	9	8
Natural Sciences/Mathematics	14	13
Social/Behavioral Sciences	40	36
Management	21	19
Education	12	11
External Degree	2	2
Other	6	6

TABLE - IV

Though the number of respondents from the Social/Behavioral Sciences and Management are somewhat high, students in these two schools do account for over half the enrollment at Dominguez Hills; making it quite probable that it is the quantity, not the quality, of the collection that leads these people to other libraries, Overall, no glaring deficiences in any one subject area were determined from this analysis. Table V correlates the other libraries mentioned as being used by Dominguez Hills students and faculty with those libraries cited as having better collections. Under the heading "Frequency of Response" the first figure is the number of respondents who use that library because it has a better collection, while the second figure after the slash is the total number of respondents who said they use that particular library for any reason. Five persons said they use another library for its collection, but did not specify that library by name. Looking at the percentage of response for the first seven libraries listed (the seven libraries that were most often cited by respondents) we find 86% of those people using UCLA, 78% of those using Cal. State-Long Beach and 46% of those using USC use those libraries because they feel those collections have better material for their needs. On the other hand, 30% of those people going to Torrance, 28% of those going to Inglewood and 25% of those going to Carson and Palos Verdes use those collections because they are better for their needs. The library ascertains from these figures that some of its patrons are using their local public libraries predominantly because they are more convenient,

Library	Frequency of Response: Better Material	
UCLA	38/44	(86%)
Cal. State Univ. - Long Beach	14/18	(78%)
USC	6/13	(46%)
Torrance Public	14/46	(30%)
Inglewood Public	6/21	(28%)
Carson Public	6/24	(25%)
Palos Verdes Public	6/24	(25%)
Cal. State Univ. - Los Angeles	3/5	
Los Angeles Public	3/5	
El Camino College	1/5	
Hawthorne Public	1/4	
A.C. Bilbrew Public	1/4	
Culver City Public	1/3	
U.C. - Irvine	1/2	
Wilmington Public	1/2	
Buena Park Public	1/1	
Golden West College	1/1	
South Gate Public	1/1	

TABLE - V

while others use larger academic libraries because they perceive those libraries to have better collections for their individual needs. The library can only assume that when a respondent states that he/she uses another library because of its collection that some comparison was, in fact, made between the material available at Dominguez Hills and the material at the other library in question. It is also significant to point out that a great many of those people who said they use another academic library also made note of the fact that those institutions have longer hours of operation than Dominguez Hills, leaving a reasonable doubt as to whether they find the collection or the hours more suitable to their needs.

Part V revealed that 17% of the respondents use the library over 8 hours a week; while 83% use the library less than 8 hours, 4% of whom identified themselves as total non-users.

The response to Part VI was pretty much as expected. Multiple answers were again acceptable, and most respondents identified the library as a place to study their own books and notes. However, a substantial number also replied that they use the library to find class-related material. Other areas receiving a high rate of response included the reserve book room, the photo-copying machines, use of current periodicals and newspapers, and use of the collection for recreational reading.

In Parts VII and VIII of the survey, respondents were asked to evaluate some of the facilities and services provided by the library. Tables VI and VII deal with those questions using the responses that were actu-

ally evaluative. The percentages are based upon the total response that fell into the 1 - 5 categories. Figures for the "Don't Use It/No Opinion" and "No Response" categories were not used in these tabulations. While the library recognizes the importance of the high number of responses in these two categories and is deeply concerned about them, the idea behind Tables VI and VII is to see how the library rated by those who gave an actual rating. Response to the facilities listed in Table VI was very favorable to the library. In all instances, ratings of 3, 4, or 5 far out stripped those of 2 or 1, and, in fact, the majority of responses fell

Service or Facility	Excellent	% of Response 5	4	3	2	1	Poor
Government Documents		20	30	36	8	6	
Reserve Book Room		30	35	25	5	5	
Term Paper Clinic		26	35	24	7	8	
Audio Visual Materials		24	33	30	9	4	
Multi-Cultural Professional Development Center		20	26	30	16	8	
Inter-Library Loan		35	22	30	9	4	
Mutual Library Use		37	26	28	8	1	
Telephone Reference		27	24	31	10	8	
Copiers		30	25	27	12	6	
Typewriters		15	29	28	10	20	
Computer Terminals		23	22	32	11	12	
Microfilm		31	34	23	8	4	
College Catalogs		23	34	30	9	4	
Special Collections		21	25	31	13	10	
Hold Book Request		30	25	26	8	11	
Group Study Rooms		30	20	33	4	13	

TABLE - VI

into the 4 and 5 rankings in all but four categories, Multi-Cultural Professional Development Center, Computer Terminals, Typewriters, and Special Collections, all of which are considered low use or limited services. The services provided by the library listed in Table VII also met with favorable response; a majority of replies in the 4 and 5 rankings in all categories. The library was pleased to learn that a majority of those people who responded to the questionnaire and evaluated the items in Parts VII and VIII of the survey felt that the library was adequately meeting their particular needs by the facilities and services listed.

The response to Part IX revealed that 69% of the respondents have grade point averages of 3.00 or above. Seventy-four people made comments at the end of the questionnaire, usually to re-enforce a complaint or complement about the library. Those comments have been grouped according to the subject with which they deal and the library staff is responding to them as they do to suggestions in our suggestion box.

Service or Facility	Excellent	% of Response 5	4	3	2	1	Poor
Hours of Operation		40	37	14	4	5	
Finding Material in Card Catalog		23	40	24	8	5	
Finding Material on Shelves		13	38	30	10	9	
Availibity of Reference Librarian		36	33	20	7	4	
Assistance from Reference Librarian		42	31	13	8	6	
Assistance from Circulation Desk		32	31	27	6	4	
Assistance from Circulation Office		33	30	25	8	4	
Courtesy from Library Staff		41	32	20	3	4	

TABLE - VII

The library was able to learn a number of interesting and important factors from the survey. First, while a considerable number of people do use the library in some fashion, only a small portion could be identified as heavy users. Second, there is a predictable balance in the reasons why people use the library, and a majority of those users responded favorably in evaluating the facilities and services provided by the library. People who use other libraries use either their local public library because it is more convenient or the larger academic libraries in the area because the material there is better for their needs. Finally, an uncomfortably large number of people did not respond at all or responded that they didn't use many of the services and facilities provided by the library.

In response to the results of the survey, the library recognizes that it cannot compete with the conveniences of a local public library, match the size of the collections of the larger academic libraries, or force people to spend more time in this library. What it can do, however, is attempt to make its clientele more aware of the types of information available from the library and how this information can meet a patron's needs.

CONCLUSION

It is felt that the most pressing concern identified from the survey is the apparent lack of knowledge concerning the scope of the facilities available from the library on the part of a good many of its patrons. The library feels that a more intensified program of user education would be beneficial. This program can take many forms (and probably will) ranging from a stepped-up campaign to publicize various facilities and services to an increased effort to obtain faculty cooperation by arranging more class tours of the library and classroom lectures by librarians, and a renewed effort to add to the curriculum a credited course on library instruction to be taught by librarians.

The exact form of the user education program and the timetable for its implementation will be discussed by the professional staff of the library to determine those areas which will be most beneficial to the patrons.

By identifying, through this survey, what it feels should be a definite concern of the entire academic community of CSC-Dominguez Hills, the library now hopes to respond to that concern with the resources at its disposal in its efforts to maintain a high level of quality in the services it provides to meet the information needs of its patrons.

APPENDIX

LIBRARY USE SURVEY

In an effort to better serve the Dominguez Hills community, we ask for your cooperation in filling out this survey. Please fill the survey out as completely as possible by checking all blanks applicable to you. The few minutes you spend on this survey will hopefully result in better library service for you. Thank you.

I. What is your college status:

1. Faculty/staff _____
2. Graduate _____
3. Senior _____
4. Junior _____
5. Sophomore _____
6. Freshman _____
7. Other _____
   please specify _____

II. What school or Department?

1. Small College _____
2. Humanities/Fine Arts _____
3. Natural Sciences/Math _____
4. Social/Behavioral Sciences _____
5. Management _____
6. Education _____
7. Experiential Education _____
8. External Degree _____
9. Other _____
   please specify _____

III. A. How many units are you taking?

1. Less than 6 _____
2. 6 - 12 _____
3. More than 12 _____

B. Are you primarily a:

1. Day student _____
2. Night student _____

IV. A. Do you use the library at Dominguez Hills?

1. Yes _____
2. No _____

B. Do you use another library instead of, or in addition to, the library at Dominguez Hills?

1. No _____
2. Yes _____

If yes, which library? _____

If yes, why:

1. Closer to home _____
2. Better material for your needs _____
3. Recommended by faculty _____
4. Quieter _____
5. Other _____
   please specify _____

V. How much do you use the library?

1. Not at all _____
2. Less than 4 hrs/wk _____
3. 4-8 hrs/wk _____
4. Over 8 hrs/wk _____

VI. Do you use the library to: (check all that apply)

1. Study your own books and notes _____
2. Read reserve material _____
3. Find material in conjunction with class assignments _____
4. Find material to pursue recreational interests _____
5. Read current periodicals and newspapers _____
6. Use the typewriters _____
7. Use the computer terminals _____
8. Use the copiers _____
9. Use AV materials _____
10. Other _____
    please specify _____

VII. Do you feel the following services provided by the library meet your needs?

	Excellent 5	4	3	2	Poor 1	Don't use it
1. Government documents						
2. Reserve Book Room						
3. Term Paper Clinic						
4. A-V materials						
5. Multi-cultural Professional Development Center						
6. Interlibrary loan						
7. Mutual Library Use						
8. Telephone Reference						
9. Copiers						
10. Computer terminals						
11. Typewriters						
12. Microfilm						
13. College Catalog Collection						
14. Special Collections						
15. Hold Book Request						
16. Group Study Room						
17. Other (please specify) _____						

VIII. How would you evaluate the following?

A. Hours the library is open.
Excellent 5 4 3 2 1 Poor ____ No Opinion

B. Finding material you need in the card catalog.
Excellent 5 4 3 2 1 Poor ____ No Opinion

C. Finding material you need on the shelves.
Excellent 5 4 3 2 1 Poor ____ No Opinion

D. Availability of reference librarian.
Excellent 5 4 3 2 1 Poor ____ No Opinion

E. Assistance from reference librarian.
Excellent 5 4 3 2 1 Poor ____ No Opinion

F. Assistance from circulation desk (2nd floor).
Excellent 5 4 3 2 1 Poor ____ No Opinion

G. Assistance from circulation office (3rd floor).
Excellent 5 4 3 2 1 Poor ____ No Opinion

H. Courtesy to you by library staif.
Excellent 5 4 3 2 1 Poor ____ No Opinion

I. Other - please specify: _____
Excellent 5 4 3 2 1 Poor ____ No Opinion

IX: What is your approximate grade point average?

1. 4.00 - 3.50 ____
2. 3.49 - 3.00 ____
3. 2.99 - 2.50 ____
4. 2.49 - 2.00 ____
5. Below 2.00 ____

X. Comments:

LIBRARY USE SURVEY

In an effort to better serve the Dominguez Hills community, we ask for your cooperation in filling out this survey. Please fill the survey out as completely as possible by checking all blanks applicable to you. The few minutes you spend on this survey will hopefully result in better library service for you. Thank you.

I. What is your college status:

1. Faculty/staff	25		5. Sophomore	49	
2. Graduate	66		6. Freshman	25	
3. Senior	161		7. Other	1	0 NR
4. Junior	126		please specify		

II. What school or Department?

1. Small College	15		6. Education	32	
2. Humanities/Fine Arts	59		7. Experiential Education	1	10 NR
3. Natural Sciences/Math	57		8. External Degree	6	
4. Social/Behavioral Sciences	136		9. Other	18	
5. Management	119		please specify		

III. A. How many units are you taking?

1. Less than 6	20	
2. 6 - 12	197	25 NR
3. More than 12	211	

B. Are you primarily a:

1. Day student	310	BOTH	15
2. Night student	95	NR	33

IV. A. Do you use the library at Dominguez Hills?

1. Yes	409	2 NR
2. No	42	

B. Do you use another library instead of, or in addition to, the library at Dominguez Hills?

1. No	155	3 NR
2. Yes	295	

If yes, which library? 272 NR 181

If yes, why:

1. Closer to home	199	4. Quieter	21
2. Better material for your needs	110	5. Other	43
3. Recommended by faculty	15	please specify	
		NR 0	

V. How much do you use the library?

1. Not at all	20	3. 4-8 hrs/wk	143	6 NR
2. Less than 4 hrs/wk	211	4. Over 8 hrs/wk	74	

VI. Do you use the library to: (check all that apply)

1. Study your own books and notes	327	6. Use the typewriters	49
2. Read reserve material	209	7. Use the computer terminals	38
3. Find material in conjunction with class assignments	309	8. Use the copiers	195
4. Find material to pursue recreational interests	114	9. Use AV materials	66
5. Read current periodicals and newspapers	153	10. Other	22
		please specify	
		NR 0	

VII. Do you feel the following services provided by the library meet your needs?

	Excellent 5	4	3	2	Poor 1	NR	Don't use it
1. Government documents	26	40	47	10	8	90	232
2. Reserve Book Room	76	89	63	11	12	81	121
3. Term Paper Clinic	30	40	28	8	10	103	234
4. A-V materials	35	48	45	13	6	107	199
5. Multi-cultural Professional Development Center	14	18	21	11	6	114	269
6. Interlibrary loan	39	25	33	10	6	110	230
7. Mutual Library Use	48	32	34	10	3	123	203
8. Telephone Reference	31	28	37	12	9	112	224
9. Copiers	66	59	63	30	16	104	115
10. Computer terminals	19	18	27	9	10	120	250
11. Typewriters	27	32	31	13	23	110	217
12. Microfilm	55	63	40	14	6	110	165
13. College Catalog Collection	38	55	49	14	10	111	176
14. Special Collections	24	28	35	14	11	114	227
15. Hold Book Request	37	33	34	11	14	110	214
16. Group Study Room	22	15	26	4	10	167	209
17. Other (please specify) _____	5	0	0	0	4	429	15

VIII. How would you evaluate the following?

A. Hours the library is open.
Excellent 142 (5) 138 (4) 54 (3) 16 (2) 19 (1) Poor — 42 No Opinion — 42 NR

B. Finding material you need in the card catalog.
Excellent 82 (5) 149 (4) 87 (3) 29 (2) 18 (1) Poor — 42 No Opinion — 46 NR

C. Finding material you need on the shelves.
Excellent 56 (5) 135 (4) 107 (3) 39 (2) 29 (1) Poor — 44 No Opinion — 43 NR

D. Availability of reference librarian.
Excellent 125 (5) 115 (4) 68 (3) 23 (2) 12 (1) Poor — 67 No Opinion — 43 NR

E. Assistance from reference librarian.
Excellent 141 (5) 105 (4) 52 (3) 25 (2) 15 (1) Poor — 67 No Opinion — 48 NR

F. Assistance from circulation desk (2nd floor).
Excellent 89 (5) 86 (4) 74 (3) 18 (2) 11 (1) Poor — 122 No Opinion — 53 NR

G. Assistance from circulation office (3rd floor).
Excellent 75 (5) 66 (4) 57 (3) 20 (2) 11 (1) Poor — 167 No Opinion — 57 NR

H. Courtesy to you by library staif.
Excellent 153 (5) 118 (4) 73 (3) 11 (2) 13 (1) Poor — 43 No Opinion — 42 NR

I. Other - please specify: _____
Excellent 10 (5) 2 (4) 3 (3) 1 (2) 12 (1) Poor — 36 No Opinion — 389 NR

IX: What is your approximate grade point average?

1. 4.00 - 3.50 — 110
2. 3.49 - 3.00 — 171
3. 2.99 - 2.50 — 92
4. 2.49 - 2.00 — 29
5. Below 2.00 — 2
NR — 49

X. Comments: 74
NR: 379

TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 453
NR = NO RESPONSE

SURVEY COMMENTS

The comments provided by respondents to the survey gave the staff some insight as to the kinds of things our patrons like and dislike about the library. It was decided by the staff to handle the comments like suggestions, and respond to those that lent themselves to a response either on the suggestion answer board in the library or in the library's column in the school newspaper for the same purpose. While many of the comments dealt with some type of complaint, there were a number of complimentary comments as well. These comments were general in nature and basically said they were happy with the library, the staff, and the services provided. Some of the other comments have been grouped by subject and are presented below.

I. Comments resulting from misinformation of patrons.

These are specific comments requesting some service the library already provides; a further indication of the need for a program of user education.

1. Library needs to subscribe to Consumer Report magazine. (We have Consumer Report from 1966 to present.)

2. Lack of important journals - for instance Journal of Applied Physiology. (We have Journal of Applied Physiology from 1945-1975.)

3. Failure to replace missing volumes in sets - see vol. 7 of World Archaeology. (Volume 7 has been replaced.)

4. Open the library from 1:00-10:30 or 11:00 p.m. on Sunday. People who work in the daytime on the weekend can't make use of the library. (The library is open from 1:00-9:00 p.m. on Sunday.)

5. Could you make the terminals in the library open to anyone with an account number? (The terminals are available for use by anyone with a proper account number.)

6. This survey is biased because it is only filled out by the people who enter the library. Try distributing it in other areas. (As mentioned in the report, almost half the responses to the survey came from outside the library.)

7. Why is it that faculty/staff are able to check out books with no return date? (Faculty/staff checkouts are for the same two-week period as students. While there is an automatic renewal at the end of this period, some accountability must be made by faculty/staff by the end of the quarter.)

8. The library should have graduate level catalogs and bulletins from other schools. (We have catalogs from local schools, the CSUC system, the UC system, and the college catalog collection on microfiche.)

II. Comments about hours.

Though a majority of the respondents were satisfied with the library's hours of operation, a number of comments were received concerning our

hours. These comments suggested that we remain open later (10:30 or 11:00 p.m.) to accommodate night students, and open earlier (7:00 a.m.) to accommodate students with 8:00 a.m. classes. Currently, the library's hours are:

Monday-Thursday	7:45 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Friday	7:45 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Saturday	9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Sunday	1:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

III. Comments about the collection.

A number of respondents offered some comment about the collection. While there were a few positive comments about some aspects of the collection, most responses pointed to what the respondent felt was a deficiency in a particular subject area. Areas mentioned in this regard include:

Bioscience	Polynesia
Medicine	Micronesia
Pharmacy	Melenesia
Natural Sciences	Sports
Local Indians	Southern California Plants and Flowers
Corporate Annual Reports	Musical Scores

IV: Other comments.

Other comments made included a request to get a better operating microfilm/microfiche printer; designating areas for group study; having library orientation programs; having well-lit and well-ventilated study areas; and questions concerning the damaged and lost book fees and the billing system.

Two other areas that received two or three comments a piece were the building temperature and smoking. A few respondents felt the building is too cold; while others had questions and comments about "no smoking" areas or the lack of them. (Since the survey was completed, "no smoking" areas have been designated.)